

Dear NBP EMS Participants and Biosolids Colleagues,



## **WEF Media Advisory Alert: AP Biosolids Articles**

Over the past year, the Associated Press (AP) has been developing what now appears to be series of articles on the topic of land application of biosolids. The first article appeared on March 6, 2008 and the second was released on Sunday, April 13, 2008 with a third story quickly following.

The second article, **“Sludge Makeup Hard to Know”**

([http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5hV2e\\_Mh-6MIkxKCmvP8fL6mEWOBwD9012T480](http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5hV2e_Mh-6MIkxKCmvP8fL6mEWOBwD9012T480)) addresses the composition of biosolids and the different classifications.

The third article, **“Sludge Tested as Lead-Poisoning Fix”**

([http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gbpCMPX9\\_kRtYkL1Yv9-OzuVxFfQD9018VJG0](http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5gbpCMPX9_kRtYkL1Yv9-OzuVxFfQD9018VJG0)) focuses on a 2005 study funded by the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) in Baltimore, Md. Dr. Rufus Chaney, an international research agronomist from the USDA, co-wrote the study and was quoted in the article.

While WEF can comment about the overall practice of biosolids recycling, it has very little knowledge about the specifics of the study referenced in the third article. However, in our continued efforts to provide accurate and balanced background information, WEF has asked Dr. Chaney to share details regarding the study.

For your reference, below is a statement from Dr. Chaney that specifically addresses the issue:

"An AP news article by John Heilprin and Kevin Vineys that appeared in newspapers today is an incomplete and imbalanced discussion of a field test I cooperated in conducting in Baltimore a few years ago. We applied Class A biosolids compost from Baltimore, a high quality soil conditioner product available for sale for all home and garden uses in the region. The soil treatments did substantially reduce the risk to children from lead (Pb)

in those soils. As reported in the paper "This longitudinal pilot study shows that in situ amendment of lead-containing yard soil with Orgro [biosolids compost] is associated with a significant reduction in bioaccessible Pb fraction and the development of a healthy turfgrass cover at 1-year follow-up."

"It is clear that our method using simple incorporation of biosolids compost rich in Fe and P into high Pb urban soils offers individual home owners the ability to greatly reduce the risk of soil Pb to their children when no public program will assist them in soil removal and replacement. I am comfortable that the issues of soil and housing Pb risks to the children were well disclosed to the participants. Contrary to claims, the families who cooperated in the field test were part of a community group where they learned more about how to protect their children from housing and environmental Pb. An ethics review at Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and HUD approved the test. I was a cooperator/advisor and no such review was sought at USDA. All funding went to JHU.

Dr. Rufus Chaney  
USDA-ARS-EMBUL Bldg. 007, BARC-West 10300  
Baltimore Blvd.  
Beltsville, MD 20705-2350

*Reference articles can be found here:*

Biosolids Compost Amendment for Reducing Soil Lead Hazards (2005):  
[http://www.biosolids.org/docs/Biosolids%20Compost%20Amendment%20for%20Reducing%20Pb%20Lead%20Hazards\\_Farfel\\_2005\\_Orgro%20lawn%20Pb%20bioaccess.pdf](http://www.biosolids.org/docs/Biosolids%20Compost%20Amendment%20for%20Reducing%20Pb%20Lead%20Hazards_Farfel_2005_Orgro%20lawn%20Pb%20bioaccess.pdf).

Reducing Children's Risk from Lead in Soil (1-1-2004):  
[http://www.biosolids.org/docs/Reducing%20Childrens%20Risk%20from%20Lead%20in%20Soil\\_Ryan%20et%20al\\_2004.pdf](http://www.biosolids.org/docs/Reducing%20Childrens%20Risk%20from%20Lead%20in%20Soil_Ryan%20et%20al_2004.pdf).

Additional resources on biosolids recycling include:

- FAQs About Biosolids:  
<http://biosolids.org/docs/frequently%20asked%20biosolids%20questions.pdf>
- FAQs About National Pretreatment Program:  
[http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/faqs.cfm?program\\_id=3](http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/faqs.cfm?program_id=3)

- Guide to Understanding Biosolids Issues:  
[http://biosolids.org/docs/Guide\\_to\\_Understanding\\_Biosolids\\_Issues\\_052506.pdf](http://biosolids.org/docs/Guide_to_Understanding_Biosolids_Issues_052506.pdf)

**Sam Hadeed**

NBP Communications Director  
601 Wythe Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-1994  
703-684-2418 Tel  
703-684-2492 FAX  
[shadeed@wef.org](mailto:shadeed@wef.org)

Visit the NBP web page - [www.biosolids.org](http://www.biosolids.org)

*Advancing environmentally sound biosolids management practices in local communities*